

March 28, 2007

**MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
LOCAL/STATE BOARD FACILITIES HEARING REPORT**

A Local/State public hearing was held at the Martin County School District – Inez Middle School on March 28, 2007, at 6:00 p.m. (local time). The purpose of the public hearing was to propose a new District Facility Plan developed by the Martin County Local Planning Committee. The Local Planning Committee (LPC) voted 11-0 in favor of the proposed new plan and the Board voted 5-0 to approve the new plan.

There were (21) twenty-one individuals in attendance exclusive of the hearing officer. Dr. Michael W. Kessinger, Assistant Superintendent, served as the district-appointed hearing officer. The following individuals were in attendance: Mark Blackburn, Supt.; Dr. Raymond Wells, Kathleen Price, Kathy Gullett, Clifford Keener, Terry Qullien (Board members); Gregory Cornette, Lisa Kirk, Devera Cornette, Nora Ray, Denise Stepp, Oreatha Stanley, Clifford Clark, Brent Haney, Robbie Fletcher, Katina Ward, Carolyn Sweeney (school district employees); Lilly Adkins (Big Sandy News); Della Adams (Parent/Business Owner); Clarence Delong (Parent); and Judy Clark (Martin County Head Start).

COMMENTS

Dr. Kessinger called the public hearing to order. The hearing officer outlined the purpose of the hearing and the hearing procedures in accordance with 702 KAR 1:001. It was explained that those persons wishing to speak would be given the opportunity and that written statements would be accepted. It was also noted that all considerations will be made available to the Kentucky Board of Education via the hearing officer's report. The hearing officer read the proposed new District Facility Plan that includes: **(a) the reorganization of the district to a PS-6, 7-8, 9-12 school organization; (b) consolidation of two middle schools to a central middle school housing 7th and 8th graders to be located at the current Warfield Middle School building; (c) leave all 6th graders at their respective elementary schools; (d) move the current Inez Elementary School enrollment to the Inez Middle School building and established that facility as a PS-6 organization; (e) relocate the district's administrative offices and the alternative school classrooms (currently in a mobile unit at Sheldon Clark High School) to the current Inez Elementary School facility; (f) construction of a new 700 capacity secondary school facility to replace Sheldon Clark High School; (g) construction of a new Area Technology Center to replace the current Martin County Area Technology Center; (h) add 3 classrooms and a cafeteria to Warfield Elementary School; (i) District White Board initiative—provide fixed active boards and projectors in all classrooms district-wide along with wireless student interactive devices; and (j) discretionary construction projects of (1) minor renovation of Inez Elementary School to become central office and alternative school; (2) minor renovation to include lighting at the football field, baseball, and softball fields; (3) construction of baseball and softball fields.**

The hearing officer reported that no mailed or emailed comments regarding the district facilities plan had been received. The floor was opened to those who wished to make a statement. Ms. Della Adams was the only individual to speak regarding the proposed plan. Her comments were related to information she had learned from talking to individuals at KDE; the district's lack of local financial resources to support the construction of a new high school; concerns about wasted space at Inez Elementary School if the central office were to be relocated there; shortage of school materials (textbooks) in the schools; and the need for

the district to work more closely with KDE related to the local facility plan. Ms. Adams' voiced concerns of the feasibility of being able to construct a new high school after 2008.

After asking if there were any other comments regarding the district's facility plan, Dr. Kessinger closed the public hearing at 6:17 pm, March 28, 2007. A video of the public meeting is available for review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Kentucky Department of Education, Division Facilities Management, Planning Branch DOES NOT recommend approval of the proposed district facilities plan presented by Martin County for the following reasons:

- The demographic projections provided by the University of Louisville indicate that the Martin County School District will lose about 5% of its student population every five years for the next 25 years. If not addressed, this situation will result in a large inventory of under-utilized space that would be a financial challenge to the district. The construction of a new high school and the relocation of the Board Office and change in school classifications in the plan proposed by the district would create more under-utilized space.
 - **702 KAR 1:001 requires that, "When a new building or building expansion is proposed in the DFP, the LPC shall prepare a narrative explaining the need for additional space. The LPC shall investigate the availability of space in adjoining districts as well as other options that may be available. The results of this investigation, including the advantages and disadvantages of contracting students to the adjoining district, shall be set forth in the narrative." This is not required for districts in which the need for a new facility is borne out by demographic projections.**
- With the district's limited bonding potential and declining population they do not have the financial means to reasonably expect to construct a new high school.
 - **The MASTER EDUCATIONAL FACILITY PLAN GUIDELINES, incorporated by reference in 702 KAR 1:001 requires that the district, "Provide a financial plan of monies available for facility improvements over the next five to ten years, including cash and bonds. This plan is to be developed in consultation with the district's fiscal agent."**
- The Plan proposed by the district would change Inez Middle School to an elementary school. This facility has a site that will accommodate high school facilities and will have a student capacity of about double the intended enrollment resulting in a facility that is grossly under-utilized.
- The Plan proposed by the district would change Inez Elementary School to a Central Office and Alternative School. These functions generally require about 15,000 sf. for a district the size of Martin County. Inez Elementary School contains 36,838 sf.; placing these facilities in the elementary school will create extremely under-utilized space.
- The addition of classroom space to Warfield Elementary would not be required if the shifting of elementary students was not undertaken as proposed in the District's Plan.

- With the challenges faced by the District, much more reasonable Plans could be developed to support education requirements, financial stability and to realistically address the changing demographics in the District.

(Note: Additional background information is attached.)

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by;

Michael W. Kessinger, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Hearing Officer

Timothy K. Lucas, KDE Fac. Mgmt.

cc: Mark W. Ryles, Director
Planning File

Attachments: Local/State Board Public Hearing Agenda
Martin County School District Facility Plan